

VZCZCXRO3984
PP RUEHDBU
DE RUEHBUL #3935/01 2460836

ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 030836Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2245
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3632
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMSOCENT MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2788
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2941
RHMFISS/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 KABUL 003935

SIPDIS

SIPDIS
NOFORN

DEPT FOR SCA/FO DAS GASTRIGHT, S/CT, SCA/A, S/CRS
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN
CENTCOM FOR POLAD, CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76
OSD FOR BREZINSKI
STATE PASS USAID FOR AID/ANE AND AID/CDHA/DG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/25/2015
TAGS: PGOV MARR PINR PTER AF
SUBJECT: HELMAND GOVERNOR ON TRIBAL WARFARE, SECURITY, NEED
FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

REF: KABUL 3843

Classified By: AMBASSADOR RONALD NEUMANN FOR REASONS 1.6 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Helmand Governor Daud asked the Ambassador on August 23 for support for efforts to carve out the space the governor said he needs to build "loyal" local governance in the province. The Governor acknowledged poppy cultivation and Taliban activities are critical threats to his efforts, but he focused on the competition between tribes -- particularly in the north of the province -- as the underlying problem. The tribal competition provides a fertile ground for poppy cultivation and Taliban activity, which overwhelm the local population's ability to control their daily lives. The Governor accepts that he must work within the parameters defined by the tradition of tribal authority, but he is convinced he can build legitimate, loyal governance -- if the central government and IC provide adequate support. The Governor said the ANA and ANP can be loyal (as long they are receiving regular salaries) and effective (but only in the context of security provided by international forces). He asked for the Ambassador's help in encouraging the British to undertake more military operations in Taliban-controlled areas and to match the former U.S. PRT Commander's record in supporting projects which demonstrate there are benefits to being loyal to the government. He would welcome increased support for projects (including road-building) which provide employment, but asked that the security budgets connected to those project be integrated into a province-wide approach. End Summary.

Tribal Elements Key to the Security Problem

¶2. (C) Helmand Governor Engineer Daud requested a meeting with the Ambassador on August 23 to appeal for support for his efforts to carve out the secure space and resources he needs to pursue efforts to build local governance "loyal" to

the central government. Daud noted that President Karzai had introduced him at the Conference of Governors the previous day (Reftel) as "my governor in a very troubled situation." The Governor described security in the south of the province -- south from Gereshk -- as relatively good, and then turned to the situation in the north, where he sees the lack of security crippling his efforts to convince the population there is an alternative to submission to tribal warfare. In the areas near Musa Qala and Kajaki, there is simply no security outside the towns themselves, a situation which has crippled both economic and social life. Daud said that, at this point, there is a constant threat that local police will become part of the tribal conflict. The ANA would remain loyal, but they are entirely inadequate to the challenge.

¶3. (C) Daud said the key to improving the security situation was controlling ongoing tribal warfare. Tribal dynamics are part of every process in the province, but in recent months have overwhelmed everything else. The key, from Daud's view, and his most immediate concern, is former governor Sher Mohammed (Alikozai tribe; based in Musa Qala). President Karzai removed Sher Mohammed from Helmand and brought him to Kabul to join the Meshrano Jirga, but the former governor is determined to avoid ceding control of the province to other tribal competitors. Sher Mohammed maintains his influence through his brother, Amir Mohammed (whom Daud is seeking to remove as Deputy Governor, and through his local militia) whose loyalty to the government Daud believes he could assure if he could provide them with steady, secure salaries. While Daud noted the Taliban have influence in all tribes in the province as well as elements directly controlled from Pakistan, he highlighted their ability to seize on Sher Mohammed's departure to increase

KABUL 00003935 002 OF 004

support for and influence on those tribal elements -- particularly the Barakzai -- that seek to fill the space left by Sher Mohammed's departure.

Time for Communities, not Individuals to Govern

¶4. (C) Daud told the Ambassador that President Karzai had convened a private meeting of the tribal leaders to appeal for their cooperation. Daud had not been included in the meeting but was especially pleased to report that President Karzai had made it clear he would not be sending Sher Mohammed back to the province. According to Daud, "the message got to Helmand in ten minutes," and helped reinforce the idea that "this is the time to give communities, not individuals, a chance to govern."

¶5. (C) Daud reported that the previous week he had called together community representatives affected by the warfare to impress on them his determination to allow them to reclaim their lives. When they reported they feared Sher Mohammed, the Governor had responded that if they organized themselves, the government, the police, and assistance would follow. Daud had told them if they wanted Sher Mohammed back, he would accept that, but if they organized themselves to work together, it would become difficult for the Taliban, Sher Mohammed, or any other force to dictate to them. Daud asked the representatives to choose 30 representatives -- drawn from the North and the South -- for a Shura to work with him to come up with a plan reflecting their wishes for the future of the province.

Facing Facts: Security is Inadequate

¶6. (C) The Governor stressed that until the security situation is brought under control, there can be little progress on any plan. His underlined the challenge of ensuring security in the face of the Taliban and while

"trying to get out from under the thumb of Sher Mohammad." Efforts to identify a new District Chief and Chief of Police for Musa Qala have been stymied by the fact that no one wants either job, but Daud expressed hope the Shura process could identify an "influential, tribal, loyal person" for the Chief of Police position. (Comment: A District Police Chief should follow from Phase III of Police Reform, which is being worked through by MOI, CSTC-A, and the German Police Program. End Comment) In the meantime, Daud said while he had hoped to rotate police from Lashkar Ghar to Musa Qala to give those units some relief -- and also provide some relief for the units at Kajaki, he did not have the resources to follow through. In order for the plan to have the desired effect the Governor would need new district leaders and extra ANA and ANP for at least two or three weeks. He was not optimistic. (Comment: Ambassador Neumann was at Kajaki Dam on August 28. The Tabiban exercise full control outside the strong points that were visited, which protect the dam. The small force located at the dam has no capacity to project force or patrol. ISAF DCG accompanied the Ambassador, and we believe ISAF is well aware of the problem. End Comment.)

Looking to ISAF to do more

17. (C) Daud reported that he is in constant contact with ISAF, and that he has been asking the British for the past two months for more operations in both the North and the South. This is the only way to open the space needed to allow him to establish governance. He is meeting with the

KABUL 00003935 003 OF 004

local communities, but in order for his outreach to yield results, the population needs to feel secure enough to try something new. Daud told the Ambassador he has delivered this message to Interior Minister Zarar, to the British Ambassador, and to the NSC. He has also discussed it with COMISAF. He is going to tell President Karzai. He asked for the Ambassador's help in encouraging the British, who seem to be "prisoners in the PRT compound" to be more forward leaning. The Ambassador said he would raise the issue of the situation in Helmand with the British Ambassador, but underlined that the British were in charge. He encouraged Daud to talk again directly to the British. (Comment: The Ambassador has spoken with ISAF CG LTG Richards who is well aware of the need to fill up maneuver units in Helmand, but likewise, that he cannot surrender major district centers to Taliban incursions. This is part of General Richards' call for more NATO forces and his interest in generating additional local police. End Comment)

18. (C) The Governor had praise for the former U.S. PRT Commander, Lt. Col. David Seis, noting that when he had asked for funds for a project in a Taliban area to demonstrate that the government was in a position to meet the community's needs, the money was in the account within 24 hours. It was exactly the kind of cooperation that makes a difference, but contrasts with the more cumbersome process now in place.

Other Critical Assistance -- and Security Implications

19. (C) Asked by the Ambassador about his own budget, Daud reported that he receives a \$200,000 annual operating budget -- the same figure available to Sher Mohammed (who had substantial parallel resources on which he could draw) when he was Governor "when there was no fighting." The Governor characterized the figure as totally inadequate -- especially when his main tool for ensuring the loyalty of the police and other public employees is the guarantee of a steady salary and minimal resources to do their work. While the Deputy Chief of Police had brought a vehicle with him when he transferred from Zabul province, the governor of Zabul is asking that it be returned. The Governor claimed each

maintenance for each of the 17 new Ranger vehicles received by the province costs \$500.

¶10. (C) Daud underlined that, "without significant military, financial, development, and political support, it will be very difficult to improve the situation in Helmand." He agreed on the importance of the employment opportunities made available through projects such as the Kajaki Dam and the extension of the cobblestone road. They not only provide income, but build support for the government. He asked that careful consideration be given to how security is provided. It is important, when decisions are made regarding who will be hired to provide security at these projects to consider the wider implications, including what tribal leader's people are being hired. His recommendation would be that a separate budget be set up for security and that those funds be used in close coordination with the governor's office. "We must always be looking at the larger security situation, as it will determine the long-term outcomes."

Bio Note

¶11. (SBU) Governor Daud, whose systematic thinking reflects background as an engineer and civil servant rather than a politician, was born in Helmand. His family is not, however, connected to one of the provincial tribes. He spent ten years as a refugee in Pakistan, where he worked for UNHCR,

KABUL 00003935 004 OF 004

before returning in 1995 to form an NGO involved in reconstruction and relief activities. After the fall of the Taliban, he came to Kabul to join the National Security Council where he became Director of Policy and Oversight. He was also the focal point for the PTS Program and detainee related issues. In December 2005, President Karzai appointed Daud Governor of Helmand to replace Sher Mohammed whose hold on the province effectively blocked central government influence. More than one more experienced politician claims to have been offered the job before Daud and to have turned it down.

¶12. (U) Dushanbe minimize considered.

NEUMANN